

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
BOARD OF EDUCATION
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

MINUTES:
COMMITTEE TO IMPLEMENT THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT
October 4, 2002
Senate Room B
9:00 a.m.

Members Present: Mark Christie (chair), Susan Genovese, Mark Emblidge

Dr. Jo Lynne DeMary was also present.

The committee convened to receive presentations and comments on reading education from nine statewide organizations. The Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals (VASSP) was listed on the agenda for the meeting, however a representative from the organization did not attend the meeting. The organizations sending representatives included the following:

Virginia State Reading Association (VSRA)
Virginia College Reading Educators (VCRE)
Virginia Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (VASCD)
Virginia Education Association (VEA)
Virginia Federation of Teachers (VFT)
Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals (VAESP)
Virginia Association of School Superintendents (VASS)
Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA)

Mr. Christie indicated that the organizations invited to present to the committee were asked to address the following questions:

1. How well are teachers being prepared to teach reading in the teacher training programs at Virginia institutions?
2. How can the preparation of reading teachers be improved?
3. How can better partnerships be fostered between educators in the field and teacher training programs?
4. How well are the available textbooks and instructional material addressing reading using the five essential components outlined by Reid Lyon?
5. How can the Early Reading Initiative and the PALS be taken to the next level of effectiveness?

The following information and comments were presented to the committee:

Virginia State Reading Association (VSRA)

- Teachers are not prepared well enough in the area of teaching reading. A teacher who has been in a four year or five year teacher-training program is still a novice when trying to teach reading.

- Reading teachers need continued supervision and mentoring as they become school building personnel as well as continuing professional development.
- The standards for reading teachers need to be increased and improved to match those standards set by the International Reading Association's (IRA) licensure requirements.
- Currently for reading teachers in grades pre-k through six, Virginia requires those teachers to have completed 6 credit hours of course work in reading related courses. The IRA standards require a minimum of 15 credit hours of course work.
- Currently for reading teachers in high school, Virginia requires those teachers to have completed 3 credit hours of course work in reading related courses. The IRA standards require a minimum of 15 credit hours of course work.
- Currently for special education reading teachers, Virginia requires those teachers to have completed 6 credit hours of course work in reading related courses. The IRA standards require a minimum of 12 credit hours of course work.
- Currently for reading administrators and paraprofessionals, Virginia does not have any requirements for completion of course work in reading related courses. The IRA standards require a minimum of 15 credit hours of course work for administrators and 120 contact hours in reading and 3 contact hours in child development for paraprofessionals.
- Teacher training programs need to actively recruit reading professionals to teach reading at college level.
- Funding should be provided for a reading specialist at each elementary, middle, and high school. Those specialists should be well compensated.
- Administrators should be required to complete some course work in reading instruction.
- All teacher-training institutions should be required to hire reading specialists to assist professors or be professors and to supervise practicums.
- State money should be used to improve teacher-training programs and should be withdrawn if those programs do not meet state guidelines and timelines for improvement.
- There is access to a wide variety of instructional materials.
- The funding formula for 2.5 hours of intervention provides too little state funding for PALS and forces LEAs to do more with less.

Virginia College Reading Educators (VCRE)

- Every teacher training program is aware of the emphasis on phonics.
- Instruction in the 5 essential components for reading is being addressed in the 37 teacher preparation programs in Virginia.
- Some institutions would have difficulty increasing the number of credit hours reading teachers would be required to take. In order to address deficiencies in reading teacher preparation there should be a requirement that all teacher training institutions provide uniform training in the competencies to all teachers in training.
- Teachers currently in the field need updated current instruction

Virginia Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (VASCD)

- Professional development in the 5 essential components for reading should be provided to teachers and administrators.
- Some teacher training institutions do a better job than others in training reading teachers.

- Uniform curriculum content and quality control in each of the training programs are helpful components in training good reading teachers. However, continuing professional development is necessary especially for those teachers who did not receive their training in Virginia.
- Teachers should be required to take some course work in reading for recertification.
- Those persons training reading teachers should have to observe a master teacher in the classroom, teach a class in K-12 each year, and ask building administrators what effective components exist in their reading programs, how are reading assessments use for instruction, and how is professional development addressed.
- Teachers should be trained to design effective lessons based on PALS results and master teachers should provide PALS instruction

Virginia Education Association (VEA)

- There needs to be a systemic approach to improve reading instruction and closing the achievement gap.
- A core curriculum for teacher preparation in reading instruction should be developed.
- The core curriculum would be guided by research and should focus on K-12.
- There should be core requirements and standards for delivery of instruction in teacher training programs.
- Develop high-quality professional development for in-service teachers based on the same core curriculum and standards.
- The current teacher training programs and lateral-entry programs should be aligned to that curriculum and those standards.
- Professional development institutes should be established for education professors and lead teachers.
- There needs to be improvement in the instructional materials and an investment in attracting and retaining highly qualified teachers.
- Class sizes need to be reduced and the challenge of time needs to be addressed.
- Teachers in training need more opportunities to work with children and practice teaching before graduating and going into the classroom on their own.
- Parent literacy efforts will help child literacy efforts.
- More reading assistance should be provided in the content areas.
- Teacher preparation programs should require teachers to take classroom management and student discipline courses.
- Teacher preparation programs should be in contact with an obtain input from those teachers in the field.

Virginia Federation of Teachers (VFT)

- Division superintendents and teaching staff should be held accountable if students do not perform well. If a first grader doesn't learn to read its not the first graders fault.
- The Put Reading First book is a book that all teachers and administrators should read.
- Phonics should be used in the first grade using one of the eight recognized programs that work.
- Require teacher preparation programs and graduate programs to have standards like K-12 has the Standards of Learning.
- The PALS should be mandatory not optional.

- Although PALS results indicate how students are doing it is not a nationally normed referenced test that will indicate how well a program is doing.
- The problem with the Early Reading Initiative is that divisions receive more money if students are not being taught to read effectively.

Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals (VAESP)

- Veteran teachers need continued training in language arts. There should be an option to receive such training in the recertification process. Administrators should take the opportunity to encourage teachers to take this option during the evaluation process.
- Providing a mentor to first year teachers is very important.
- Often the people who are the least trained to teach reading are serving the most at-risk students with the most difficulties in learning to read.
- Well trained paraprofessionals are needed in the classrooms.
- Class size reduction is necessary.
- Textbooks that are currently available are appropriate.
- There is a need for more teachers trained in using PALS to assist students with the development of reading skills.
- There needs to be more emphasis on spelling, decoding, and writing.

Virginia Association of School Superintendents (VASS)

- Work needs to be done to help students struggling with reading.
- Not all students learn in the traditional time frame
- Teachers need training in identifying what skills students have mastered.
- Teachers need strategies for reading comprehension.
- A requirement for teachers to take continuing education courses instead of 2 day workshops would provide teachers better opportunities to interact with the instructors and apply what they learn.
- There needs to be regular meetings between the teacher training institutions and the school divisions to have successful reading instruction.
- The state needs to provide training in the analysis of PALS data and the development of assessments.
- Elementary teachers need planning time to develop individualized interventions for struggling students.

Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA)

- There needs to be state categorical funds for reading specialist in all public schools.
- Teacher preparation programs and professional development programs should use mentors and practicums to provide teachers in training more exposure to students.
- Teachers in training need exposure to a variety of children to receive a variety of experiences with difficult reading problems

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.